

(b) the measures taken by the Government to connect these areas to the main roads; and

(c) the arrangements made by Government to provide foodgrains etc. at the reasonable prices to the residents of this region?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE): (a) to (c) In order to provide connectivity to people of Pratap Nagar/Gajna areas, two medium motor vehicle bridges have been constructed, one each on Bhagirathi and Bhilangana rivers at a cost of Rs. 30 crores. While the Bridge at Piplaldal (on Bhilangana) is operational, the Siyasu Bridge (on Bhagirathi) is complete but would be operational for vehicular traffic once the approaches are completed. An additional amount of Rs. 13 crores has also been provided for connectivity of roads to the Pratap Nagar/Gajna areas. Further, free Boat services have been put in operation at Project cost for the people of Bhildiana till the Siyasu Bridge is operational.

A heavy motor bridge at Dobra costing around Rs. 90 crores has also taken up for construction by the State Government.

It has also been decided by the State Government that the additional cost of transportation of essential commodities for the increased distance of travel shall be borne by the State Government. There would be no increase in the cost of food grains on account of additional transportation upto the godowns and kerosene oil would be maintained at the subsidized price by the State Government.

Development of Information Technology and Bio-technology

2059. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Information Technology and Bio technology are the two most important pillars of development in the 21st Century;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to popularize the application of Bio-technology in the field of rural development to alleviate poverty and to generate more employment opportunities for poor masses; and

(c) the future plans of Uttaranchal in the field of Bio-technology?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Information Technology & Bio-technology are two important pillars, among many others, for development in 21st Century.

(b) The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology has been implementing a scheme on Bio-technology based Programmes for Societal Development to benefit SC/ST populations, Women as well as others in rural areas with an objective to develop skills and create self-employment opportunities. The programmes include several field based extension, demonstration and training projects on proven and field tested technologies for rural development. Some examples include: value added floriculture; processing of horticulture produce; cultivation and processing of medicinal and aromatic plants; production and application of vermicompost, biopesticides and biofertilisers; high value mushroom cultivation, aquaculture, poultry and rabbit rearing for wool extraction and transfer of modern agriculture practices. In health sector, projects were implemented for awareness and counselling on genetic disorders and creating awareness on nutrition including traditional food and healthcare. Five Rural Bioresource Complexes have been set up at Karnataka; Haryana; Uttaranchal; Maharashtra and Orissa for social empowerment and economic upliftment of the rural population. The complexes provide improved interventions for value addition to the existing technologies, with clear market linkages and buy-back arrangements. These would benefit approximately 10000 families. All these projects are implemented through Autonomous Institutes, Non-Governmental Organisations, Charitable Trusts, Universities and Government Agencies etc.

(c) The Department of Bio-technology had supported several R&D projects and field demonstrations for rural areas implemented at universities and institutes of Uttaranchal State. However, there are no major programmes/projects submitted by Uttaranchal State Government to the department indicating the future plans of the State.

Agreement for development of science and technology

2060. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and the Association of South East